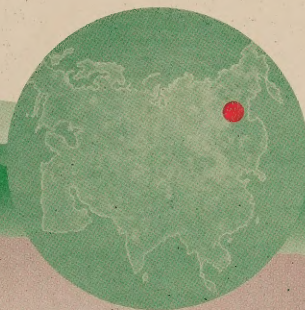


THE MODEL FOREST PROGRAM IN R U S S I A

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CANADA-RUSSIA COOPERATION IN
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF FORESTS

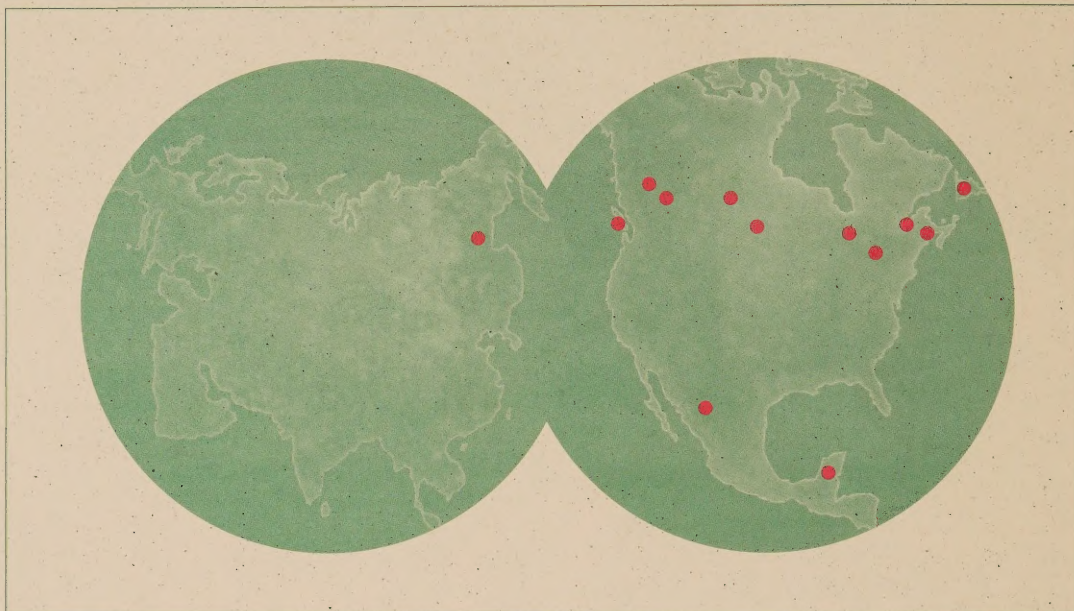


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The Model Forest Program



Forests are among the world's most important ecosystems and a major source of social benefits and economic wealth. Consequently, the need to manage forests in a sustainable manner is crucial to current and future generations. The model forest program is designed to respond to a growing awareness that forest management practices need to change to reflect the fact that forests can, and must, be managed to meet environmental, social, and economic goals. To reach these

goals, all interested groups must understand and agree on the operational practices and management framework needed to manage forests from various viewpoints, such as timber production, wildlife conservation, or watershed protection. The creation of partnerships among groups representing industry, environmentalists, indigenous groups, academics, and local communities is essential to the success of the program.

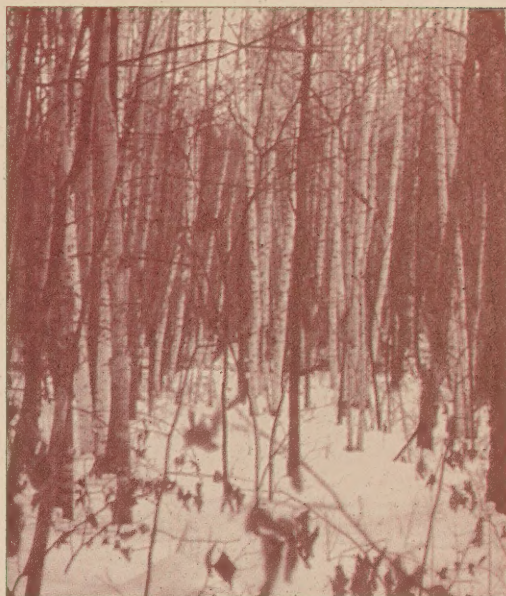
The International Model Forest Network

Interest in the model forest concept continues to grow around the world as countries work toward a mutual understanding of sustainable forest management. Any such understanding must recognize the different political, economic, social, and cultural values that influence forest management in different regions of the world. The network of international model forests presents new opportunities for the exchange of technical information and expertise among nations. Initially, Canada developed the International Model Forest Program to establish model forest sites in Mexico, Russia and Malaysia. These model forests represent an essential element of the International Partnerships Program, a component of the Canadian Government's Green Plan.

OBJECTIVES OF THE MODEL FOREST NETWORK

While specific objectives for each model forest flow from the interests of the participating countries, the broad objectives of the International Model Forest Network are as follows:


- to foster international cooperation and the exchange of ideas relating to the working concept of sustainable forest management;
- to support international cooperation in critical aspects of forest science and social science leading to new models of forest management; and
- to support ongoing international discussions on the criteria and principles of sustainable development.



INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR THE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF THE WORLD'S FORESTS

The long-term plan is to expand the network globally and encourage other countries to join Canada, Mexico, Russia, and Malaysia. It is hoped that this network of model forests, defining sustainable forest management in a local or regional context, can assist nations as they explore their future course in setting forest management policy.

Russia is the second international partner in the model forest program and has established its first model forest site in the Far Eastern territory of Khabarovsk Krai. Canada and Russia will each contribute \$3 million to the model forest site to support a wide-ranging work program. The Russian Federal Forest Service is responsible for coordinating the program in Russia.



The Model Forest Program in Russia: Russia's Forests

The forests of the Russian Federation comprise approximately 24% of the world's forest cover and are a major carbon pool for the northern hemisphere. Varying widely in composition, form, and productivity, Russia's forests grow on lowlands, plains, and mountain ranges stretching from the Baltic Sea and the Barents Sea in the West to the Pacific Ocean. From north to south, the forests stretch more than 2000 km from the Arctic Ocean to the dry steppes of Kazakhstan, the forest vegetation changing from tundra, open woodland, and northern taiga swamp forests to productive stands growing on podsolic soils and including pine woods and deciduous forests.

The forest resources in Russia are owned jointly by the State and territorial governments, and are controlled and managed by departments of the Russian Federation government, such as the Federal Forest Service of Russia, its regional representatives, and local bodies. The Russian Federation government is also responsible for managing national parks, training staff and directing experimental forest units.

Forests managed by the Russian Federation make up a "forest estate". This concept is an important factor in forest management practices. Of the total area of 1 181 million ha in the national forest estate, 1 111 million ha are under the jurisdiction of the Russian Federal Forest Service. Russia also has 24 national parks totaling 2 500 000 ha.

In forests managed by the Federal Forest Service, three main categories of species account for 90.4% of the total forest area: 72% of the stands are coniferous, 16% are softwood, and 2.4% are hardwood. The predominant coniferous species is larch (*Larix*). Birches (*Betula pendula* and *B. pubescens*) are the predominant softwood deciduous species. In the hardwood deciduous group (mainly oaks), *Quercus robur* is the main species in the European part of Russia and *Q. mongolica* is found primarily in the Far East. The three main species categories account for

97.9% of the total standing volume with 78.9% coniferous, 16.6% softwood deciduous, and 2.4% hardwood deciduous.

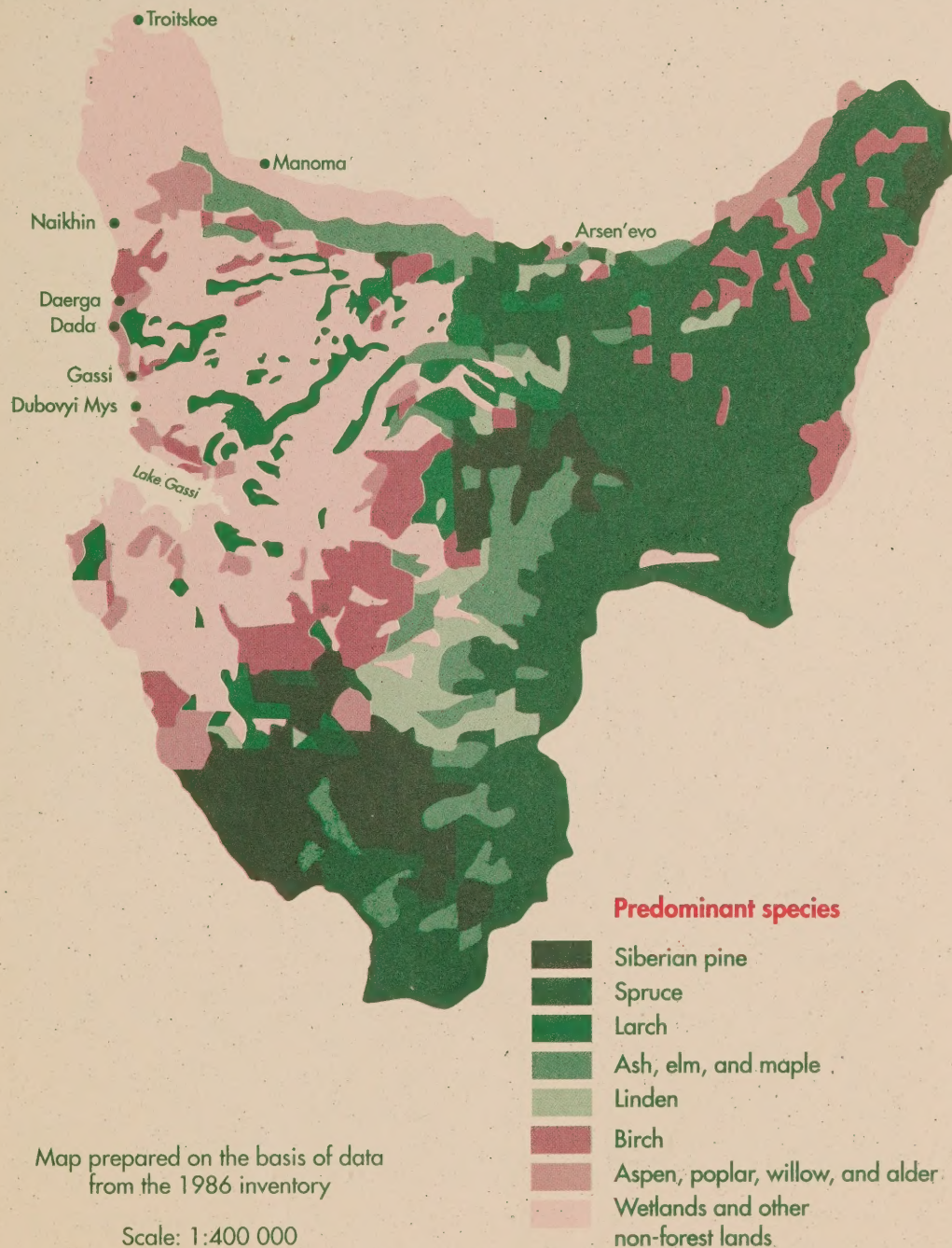
Russian forests are divided into three groups according to their economic importance and designated use:

- Group 1: 256.8 million ha (21.7%) — protected areas, i.e., for watershed protection, health protection, recreational functions, environmental protection, and scientific, historical, and social areas.
- Group 2: 89.2 million ha (7.6%) — forests growing in densely populated areas with both protective and limited-exploitation values.
- Group 3: 834.9 million ha (70.7%) — forests used mainly for resource management and intended for use in meeting national socio-economic demands.

Regeneration is of prime importance on Russian forest lands. Planting, sowing, and assisted natural regeneration are required on harvested areas, burned areas, and degraded lands. As a result of recent efforts, the area requiring reforestation in Russia decreased between 1966 and 1993 from 3.02 million ha to 2.10 million ha, mainly in the European Urals. The total area of planted forests increased nearly five-fold during the same period and accounts for 1.9% of the total stocked forest area of Russia and 8.2% in the European Urals.

Russia established a foundation for the future sustainable development of its forests with the adoption of the "Principles of Forest Legislation of the Russian Federation" in 1993, with programs such as the State Program for Reforestation, and with its involvement in the Model Forest Program and the Working Group on Criteria and Indicators for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Boreal and Temperate Forests.

Gassinski Model Forest: Forest Vegetation Cover types



The Model Forest Program in Russia: The Gassinski Model Forest

The Gassinski Model Forest is located in the boreal forest of Russia's Far East, in the Khabarovsk Krai, and has a total area of 384 484 ha. The model forest is situated in the Central Amur River lowland, bordered by the Sikhote-Alin' Mountains and the left bank of the Amur River. There are hilly and mountainous sections, with lowlands and swamps adjacent to the floodplain of the Amur River.

The predominant species found in the model forest are Yeddo spruce, Manchurian birch, and Korean pine. Other important species include larch, linden, ash, elm, oak, and poplar. Pine nut production is an important economic activity, with over 55 000 ha set aside for this purpose. Other forest areas are protected to safeguard valuable salmon spawning grounds. Forests managed for timber production cover 288 000 ha and support six industrial forest harvesting and wood processing enterprises in the Nanaiskii District.

Other important economic activities in the model forest include agriculture, hunting and wildlife management, fishing, and harvesting of non-wood forest products including honey, medicinal plants, fruits and berries, and natural resins and oils. With its highly diversified wildlife and fauna, including such species as the Siberian tiger, wild boar, and moose, expansion of tourism and recreational opportunities will be pursued. The model forest will work to support these economic activities while preserving the natural environment.

The native people living in the model forest area are called the Nanai, and their economic base is their traditional way of life. Any design for an approach to sustainable management in the Gassinski Model Forest must ensure protection for the traditional land uses of the native people, that is, to ensure the preservation of the natural forest ecosystem.



THE GOALS OF THE GASSINSKI MODEL FOREST ARE:

1. Providing an ecological data base of the model forest, including strategies to conserve indigenous species.
2. Preserving the biological diversity of the forest.
3. Diversifying the economic activity to attain sustainable development.
4. Selecting the most rational path in utilizing forest resources.

5. Registering and actively supporting the interests of the indigenous communities.
6. Increasing the awareness of inhabitants and users of the forest of the importance of sustainable development and involving the community in the decision-making process.
7. Introducing the most progressive system of administration — a system of integrated administration of natural resources — to ensure sustainable development.
8. Using the results of scientific and technical progress and the scientific and planning strengths of the Russian and Canadian organizations.
9. Selecting the most rational paths in the development of industrial forest activities.
10. Transferring to other forest areas the experience, knowledge, and technology accumulated during the process of implementing the concept of the model forest; introducing a system to train personnel and educate the public in other territories.
11. Ensuring the integrated, sustainable and predicable utilization of ecological, social, and economic resources.

The Gassinski Model Forest was created to develop and support a partnership to further the concept of sustainable development. The utilization of the forest resources will be carried out using methods that will not compromise the surrounding environment, the wildlife, or the social fabric.



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